# City of Seattle

**Department of Planning & Development**
D. M. Sugimura, Director

**FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE**
**EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

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| Project Number: | 3017142 |
| Address: | 1420 E Howell Street |
| Applicant: | Yoriko Endo, Caron Architecture |
| Date of Meeting: | Wednesday, January 28, 2015 |
| Board Members Present: | Natalie Gualy (Chair)<br>Krystal Brun<br>Curtis Bigelow<br>Dan Foltz<br>Christina Orr-Cahall<br>Kevin Price |
| Board Members Absent: | None |
| DPD Staff Present: | Lisa Rutzick for Lindsay King, Land Use Planner |

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**SITE & VICINITY**

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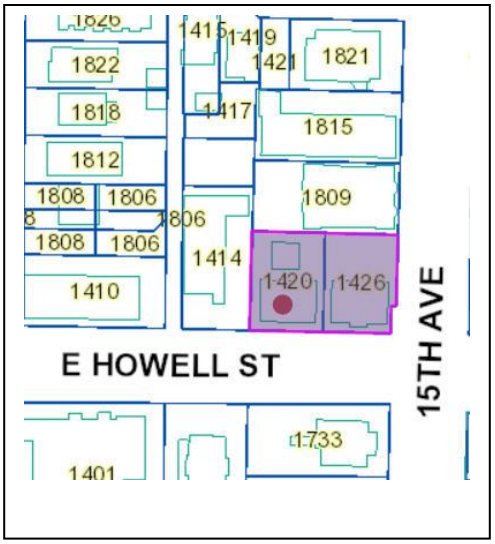
| Site Zone: | Lowrise Three (LR3) |
| Nearby Zones: | (North) LR3<br>(South) LR3<br>(East) LR3<br>(West) LR3 |
| Lot Area: | 10,163 sf |



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|---|---|
| Current Development: | The subject site is located on the northwest corner of E Howell Street and 15th Avenue. The site consists of two lots, each containing a 4-plex multifamily structure. The site is mostly flat but is elevated from the E Howell Street sidewalk where an existing 2-6 foot rockery is located. Three very large, mature street trees are located within the E Howell Street planting strip. While street trees exist in each planting strip, SDOT has stated the 22" Douglas Fir, 20" Western Red Cedar and the 24" Austrian Pine must be maintained through future development. 15th Avenue is designated as a minor arterial street. The site is also located within the Capitol Hill Urban Center designation. |
| Access: | Vehicular and pedestrian access is available from E Howell Street and 15th Avenue. |
| Surrounding Development: | The neighborhood is characterized by small single family homes, low- and mid-rise apartment and condominium buildings, most of which date from the early to mid-twentieth century. Older buildings on 15th Avenue are typically 3-4 story brick structures, while later buildings tend to be wood frame or concrete structures, ranging from 3-4 stories. Recent developments are typically wood frame buildings, 3-4 stories in height. Most of these buildings occupy only one or two parcels, creating a fairly consistent scale of development throughout the neighborhood. Many of the existing buildings are set back from the street and from adjacent property lines, while others, particularly larger buildings, are built out to their property lines. Brick is the most common cladding material, particularly in older buildings, while later buildings are clad in a variety of materials including wood, brick and concrete masonry. |
| ECAs: | None |
| Neighborhood Character: | The area is well served by transit and is beginning to be developed with higher density multi-family residential structures. |

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Early Design Guidance for a four story, 56-unit residential structure. No parking is provided. The existing structures will be demolished.

**EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: July 30, 2014**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Multiple members of the public attended this Early Design Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Expressed concerned about the potential noise impacts of the proposed rooftop deck.
- Felt design option A and B do not do enough to save the street trees on E Howell Street.
- Noted there is substantial separation between buildings on E Howell Street. Felt the proposed building should respect the existing spatial context.
- Felt option A provided the better response to the E Howell Street context.
- Felt the larger façade should be oriented towards 15th Avenue.
- Felt option A was preferable for a number of reasons including providing a courtyard, the ground level green space, and orienting the longer façade toward 15th Avenue.
- Expressed concern about a 40 foot tall façade facing the west. Noted the new façade will be substantially larger than the existing building.
- Noted option A could be modified to provide a larger setback to the north if necessary.
- Would like to see a smaller building that matches the height of the existing structures.
- Preferred a mix of housing unit sizes to encourage varied demographics.
- Would like to see an architectural design that fits within the neighborhood.
- Felt bicycle storage should be as friendly and usable as possible to make it encouraging for residents.
- Felt the material and color choices should be appropriate for the earthy, eclectic neighborhood.
- Would like to see basement units removed and parking provided.
- Expressed concern about construction impacts on adjacent neighbors and streets. Would like additional information submitted at MUP stage of review showing the truck travel routes.

**FINAL RECOMMENDATION MEETING: January 28, 2015**

At the Final Recommendation meeting, the design had evolved to include a symmetrical U-shaped building configuration with a central courtyard. The building footprint was shifted northward to avoid compromising the health of the mature street trees. The material palette included brick on three of the four exterior elevations and fiber cement panels in several tones on the north and interior facades, as well as the uppermost portion of all elevations. The large windows were black vinyl the metal accents (building numbers, Juliette railings, etc.) a black/dark charcoal color. The courtyard was elevated approximately four feet above sidewalk and all of the setback areas heavily planted to provide buffering in this semi public/private space.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following public comments were offered at the Recommendation meeting:

- Felt the building is too large with too many units for the neighborhood.
- Supported the proposed design and the set back from the sidewalk, as well as the location of the bike room.

**PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS**

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance.

**EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE:**

1. **Massing and Building Location**
   The Board felt Massing Option A provided the better design solution by locating a south facing courtyard space on E Howell Street. The Board felt option A should move forward to MUP submittal with the following guidance:
   a) The Board noted many benefits of Massing Option A which included:
      i) A more sympathetic façade for the E Howell Street (CS-A2, CS-B3, DC2-A).
      ii) A strong street wall on 15th Ave (CS2-A2,DC2-A).
      iii) Inclusion of a south facing courtyard (CS-B2, PL1-A2, DC2-A, DC3-I-ii).
      iv) Locating amenity space at ground level rather than a rooftop deck, lowering the overall height of the structure (PL1-A2, DC2-A).
   b) The Board was not concerned with the reduced north setback of Option A, noting the provided setback is consistent with the setback provided by the existing structure to the north (DC2-A).
   c) The Board did note that Massing Option A should include an appropriate corner treatment consistent with the existing context (CS2-C).
   d) At the Recommendation Meeting, the Board requested window overlay diagrams for the building to the north and west. The Board noted the facades facing adjacent residential structures should be designed to minimize disrupting the privacy of residents in adjacent buildings (CS2-D5).
   e) At the Recommendation Meeting, the Board requested site sections beyond the property line, to include the buildings next door to the north and west (CS2-D4 and D5).

**2. E Howell Street Right-of-Way Street Trees.** The Board noted the street trees on E Howell Street are exceptional specimens and great care should be taken with site and building design to maintain the street trees.
   a) The Board felt the final massing location and setbacks should be resolved to support the future long term survival of the street trees within the E Howell right-of-way. The Board did support slight changes to the massing to accomplish this goal (CS2-D, DC3-I-v).
   b) The Board expressed support for maintaining the existing smaller Hawthorne within the E Howell Street right-of-way, but recognizes SDOT will make the final decision (DC3-I-v).

3. **Courtyard.** The Board felt the south facing courtyard provides a great opportunity for public visual amenity. The Board also notes the courtyard is consistent with the Capitol Hill vernacular. The Board noted that Massing Option A was not the preferred option and that substantial work was necessary to further develop the site and building design.

a) The Board felt the façade facing E Howell Street should be treated to encourage a friendly, neighborly street character (CS2-A1 and A2, CS2-I, CSA3-I-iv, DC2-A, C and D).
b) The Board noted they were particularly interested in a successful transition from the sidewalk to the primary entry. At the Recommendation Meeting, the Board would like to see a study of the entry sequence for the pedestrians and bicycles entering the site. The Board noted this transition study should inform an appropriate location for the primary residential entry (CS2-B, CS2-II, PL2-I and II, DC2-D, DC3-A).
c) The Board did not give specific guidance on the design for the front entry, but felt that a front porch gesture could further the neighborly character of the building and courtyard space (PL2).
d) The Board expressed support for integrating bike parking entry and storage location into the overall flow of the building. The Board noted that locating bike parking near the front entry would help encourage use by residents (PL4-B).
e) At the Recommendation Meeting the Board requested character sketches and detailed renderings of the courtyard space (DC3-B, DC3-I-i-vii).
f) The Board felt the applicant should consider reducing exterior circulation walkways by locating doors for corner units to reclaim walkway as interior space (DC2-A).

**4. Materials**

a) The Board encouraged use of durable, quality materials respectful of the existing materiality context of the established Capitol Hill neighborhood (CS3-A1 and A4, CS3-I-iv, DC4-II).
b) The Board noted that this is not an appropriate location for bright color materials but is most appropriate for materials that express characteristics of the local neighborhood character (DC4-II).
c) The Board requested the applicant demonstrate at the Recommendation meeting how the chosen materials will express connection and form in application (DC4-A).

**FINAL RECOMMENDATION:**

The Board was very pleased with the proposed design and its progression since the last meeting. The Board agreed that the design was attractive and contemporary, while including significant respect to the neighborhood character. The material palette featured a predominance of high quality brick and expansive glazing, along with significant ground level landscape vegetation. In addition to these features, the Board also agreed that the design provided a responsiveness to the context with the courtyard configuration and setbacks to preserve the Exceptional street trees and respect neighboring properties.

The Board offered further guidance on the following items:

1. **North Elevation.**

a. The Board was pleased that the fenestration of the north elevation was configured to minimize direct lines of sight into the windows of the neighboring property.
b. The Board was concerned that the design of the north façade was too flat and monotonous in color. (CS2-A-2, CD2-A-2)
    i. The Board recommended that the light color shown as Heron Plume be replaced with the darker tone shown as Urban Bronze, already included along the top section of this elevation. See pages 23 and 24 in the presentation packet.
    ii. The Board also noted that if the applicant decided to change the fiber-cement panel to brick along this elevation that would be considered a very satisfactory and welcome change.

2. **South Elevation.** The Board was very pleased with the courtyard configuration and materiality. However, they recommended that the light color, shown as Heron Plume, be adjusted to a warmer, more muted tone of grey to create less contrast from dark grey and brick tones, and distract emphasis away from the brick materiality. (DC4-I)

3. **Materials.** The Board discussed the two versions of brick color shown in the packet: a monochromatic burgundy color versus a variegated brick blend mix. While the renderings showed a variegated pattern, the material board included only the solid burgundy. The Board saw compelling arguments to each palette option and recommended the design team to explore both palettes with the Planner to avoid an institutional appearance, while recognizing the contemporary design within the more traditional neighborhood context. (CS3-A-1, CS3-A-4, CS3-I-iv)

4. **Architectural Details.** In order to provide a more to provide a more consistent palette of architectural details, the Board recommended the following.
    a. The Board recommended that the exterior light fixtures be a dark bronze color, rather than the silver color (shown on page 28) to match the windows, bollards and other lighting fixtures. (PL2-III-I, DC4-II-i)
    b. The Board recommended that the vents shown on all elevations be colored to match the building field color in which they are located. (DC4-II-i)

5. **Bike Storage.** The appearance and functionality of the bike storage room in such close proximity to the main residential entrance created a few considerations contemplated by the Board. The Board is interested in promoting usability and security of this space and suggested providing direct access from the vestibule to the bike storage room, rather than from the entry lobby. (PL4-B-2)

6. **Landscape Design.** The Board was very pleased with several landscape design elements, shown on page 19, including:
    a. The two seating benches shown in the courtyard;
    b. The formality of the courtyard landscaping that harkens to a more traditional, formal, symmetrical design;
    c. The preservation of the three large Exceptional street trees;

d. The increased dimensions of the front and side setback areas;
e. The generously planted landscape buffers provided on all sides of the site.

The Board identified the Citywide Design Guidelines & Neighborhood specific guidelines (as applicable) of highest priority for this project.

The Neighborhood specific guidelines are summarized below. For the full text please visit the Design Review website.

## CONTEXT & SITE

**CS1 Natural Systems and Site Features: Use natural systems/features of the site and its surroundings as a starting point for project design.**

**CS1-B Sunlight and Natural Ventilation**

**CS1-B-1. Sun and Wind:** Take advantage of solar exposure and natural ventilation. Use local wind patterns and solar gain to reduce the need for mechanical ventilation and heating where possible.

**CS1-B-2. Daylight and Shading:** Maximize daylight for interior and exterior spaces and minimize shading on adjacent sites through the placement and/or design of structures on site.

**CS2 Urban Pattern and Form: Strengthen the most desirable forms, characteristics, and patterns of the streets, block faces, and open spaces in the surrounding area.**

**CS2-A Location in the City and Neighborhood**

**CS2-A-1. Sense of Place:** Emphasize attributes that give a distinctive sense of place. Design the building and open spaces to enhance areas where a strong identity already exists, and create a sense of place where the physical context is less established.

**CS2-A-2. Architectural Presence:** Evaluate the degree of visibility or architectural presence that is appropriate or desired given the context, and design accordingly.

**CS2-B Adjacent Sites, Streets, and Open Spaces**

**CS2-B-2. Connection to the Street:** Identify opportunities for the project to make a strong connection to the street and public realm.

**CS2-B-3. Character of Open Space:** Contribute to the character and proportion of surrounding open spaces.

**CS2-C Relationship to the Block**

**CS2-C-1. Corner Sites:** Corner sites can serve as gateways or focal points; both require careful detailing at the first three floors due to their high visibility from two or more streets and long distances.

**CS2-D Height, Bulk, and Scale**

**CS2-D-4. Massing Choices:** Strive for a successful transition between zones where a project abuts a less intense zone.

**CS2-D-5. Respect for Adjacent Sites:** Respect adjacent properties with design and site planning to minimize disrupting the privacy of residents in adjacent buildings.

***Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:***

**CS2-I Streetscape Compatibility**

**CS2-I-ii. Street Trees:** Provide street trees with tree grates or in planter strips

**CS2-I-iii: Entrances:** Vehicles entrances to buildings should not dominate the streetscape

**CS2-I-v. Multiple Frontages:** For buildings that span a block and "front" on two streets, each street frontage should receive individual and detailed site planning and architectural design treatments.

**CS2-II Corner Lots**

**CS2-II-i. Residential Entries:** Incorporate residential entries and special landscaping into corner lots by setting the structure back from the property lines.

**CS2-III Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility**

**CS2-III-i. Building Mass:** Break up building mass by incorporating different façade treatments to give the impression of multiple, small-scale buildings, in keeping with the established development pattern.

**CS2-III-ii. Views:** Consider existing views to downtown Seattle, the Space Needle, Elliott Bay and the Olympic Mountains, and incorporate site and building design features that may help to preserve those views from public rights-of-way.

**CS2-III-iii. Sunlight:** Design new buildings to maximize the amount of sunshine on adjacent sidewalks throughout the year.

**CS3 Architectural Context and Character: Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.**

**CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes**

**CS3-A-1. Fitting Old and New Together:** Create compatibility between new projects, and existing architectural context, including historic and modern designs, through building articulation, scale and proportion, roof forms, detailing, fenestration, and/or the use of complementary materials.

**CS3-A-4. Evolving Neighborhoods:** In neighborhoods where architectural character is evolving or otherwise in transition, explore ways for new development to establish a positive and desirable context for others to build upon in the future.

***Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:***

**CS3-I Architectural Concept and Consistency**

**CS3-I-iv. Materials:** Use materials and design that are compatible with the structures in the vicinity if those represent the neighborhood character.

## PUBLIC LIFE

**PL1 Connectivity: Complement and contribute to the network of open spaces around the site and the connections among them.**

**PL1-A Network of Open Spaces**

**PL1-A-1. Enhancing Open Space:** Design the building and open spaces to positively contribute to a broader network of open spaces throughout the neighborhood.

**PL1-A-2. Adding to Public Life:** Seek opportunities to foster human interaction through an increase in the size and quality of project-related open space available for public life.

**PL2 Walkability: Create a safe and comfortable walking environment that is easy to navigate and well-connected to existing pedestrian walkways and features.**

**PL2-B Safety and Security**

**PL2-B-1. Eyes on the Street:** Create a safe environment by providing lines of sight and encouraging natural surveillance.

**PL2-B-2. Lighting for Safety:** Provide lighting at sufficient lumen intensities and scales, including pathway illumination, pedestrian and entry lighting, and/or security lights.

**PL2-B-3. Street-Level Transparency:** Ensure transparency of street-level uses (for uses such as nonresidential uses or residential lobbies), where appropriate, by keeping views open into spaces behind walls or plantings, at corners, or along narrow passageways.

***Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:***

**PL2-I Human Scale**

**PL2-I-i. Building Entries:** Incorporate building entry treatments that are arched or framed in a manner that welcomes people and protects them from the elements and emphasizes the building's architecture.

**PL2-I-ii. Pedestrian Character:** Improve and support pedestrian-orientation by using components such as: non-reflective storefront windows and transoms; pedestrian-scaled awnings; architectural detailing on the first floor; and detailing at the roof line.

**PL2-II Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances**

**PL2-II-i. Entryways:** Provide entryways that link the building to the surrounding landscape.

**PL2-III Personal Safety and Security**

**PL2-III-i. Lighting/Windows:** Consider

a. pedestrian-scale lighting, but prevent light spillover onto adjacent properties
b. architectural lighting to complement the architecture of the structure
c. transparent windows allowing views into and out of the structure—thus incorporating the "eyes on the street" design approach.

**PL4 Active Transportation: Incorporate design features that facilitate active forms of transportation such as walking, bicycling, and use of transit.**

**PL4-B Planning Ahead for Bicyclists**

**PL4-B-2. Bike Facilities:** Facilities such as bike racks and storage, bike share stations, shower facilities and lockers for bicyclists should be located to maximize convenience, security, and safety.

**PL4-B-3. Bike Connections:** Facilitate connections to bicycle trails and infrastructure around and beyond the project.

## DESIGN CONCEPT

**DC2 Architectural Concept: Develop an architectural concept that will result in a unified and functional design that fits well on the site and within its surroundings.**

**DC2-A Massing**

**DC2-A-1. Site Characteristics and Uses:** Arrange the mass of the building taking into consideration the characteristics of the site and the proposed uses of the building and its open space.

**DC2-A-2. Reducing Perceived Mass:** Use secondary architectural elements to reduce the perceived mass of larger projects.

**DC2-C Secondary Architectural Features**

**DC2-C-3. Fit With Neighboring Buildings:** Use design elements to achieve a successful fit between a building and its neighbors.

**DC2-D Scale and Texture**

**DC2-D-1. Human Scale:** Incorporate architectural features, elements, and details that are of human scale into the building facades, entries, retaining walls, courtyards, and exterior spaces in a manner that is consistent with the overall architectural concept

**DC2-D-2. Texture:** Design the character of the building, as expressed in the form, scale, and materials, to strive for a fine-grained scale, or "texture," particularly at the street level and other areas where pedestrians predominate.

**DC3 Open Space Concept: Integrate open space design with the building design so that they complement each other.**

**DC3-A Building-Open Space Relationship**

**DC3-A-1. Interior/Exterior Fit:** Develop an open space concept in conjunction with the architectural concept to ensure that interior and exterior spaces relate well to each other and support the functions of the development.

**DC3-B Open Space Uses and Activities**

**DC3-B-4. Multifamily Open Space:** Design common and private open spaces in multifamily projects for use by all residents to encourage physical activity and social interaction.

***Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:***

**DC3-I Residential Open Space**

**DC3-I-i. Open Space:** Incorporate quasi-public open space with residential development, with special focus on corner landscape treatments and courtyard entries.

**DC3-I-ii. Courtyards:** Create substantial courtyard-style open space that is visually accessible to the public view.

**DC3-I-iii. View Corridors:** Set back development where appropriate to preserve view corridors.

**DC3-I-iv. Upper-floor Setbacks:** Set back upper floors to provide solar access to the sidewalk and/or neighboring properties.

**DC3-I-v. Street Trees:** Mature street trees have a high value to the neighborhood and departures from development standards that an arborist determines would impair the health of a mature tree are discouraged.

**DC3-I-vi. Landscape Materials:** Use landscape materials that are sustainable, requiring minimal irrigation or fertilizer.

**DC3-I-vii. Porous Paving:** Use porous paving materials to enhance design while also minimizing stormwater run-off.

**DC3-II Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions**

**DC3-II-ii. Mature Street Trees:** Supplement/complement existing mature street trees

**DC4 Exterior Elements and Finishes: Use appropriate and high quality elements and finishes for the building and its open spaces.**

**DC4-A Exterior Elements and Finishes**

**DC4-A-1. Exterior Finish Materials:** Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

**DC4-A-2. Climate Appropriateness:** Select durable and attractive materials that will age well in Seattle's climate, taking special care to detail corners, edges, and transitions.

**DC4-D Trees, Landscape, and Hardscape Materials**

**DC4-D-4. Place Making:** Create a landscape design that helps define spaces with significant elements such as trees.

***Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:***

**DC4-I Height, Bulk, and Scale**

**DC4-I-i. Materials:** Masonry and terra cotta are preferred building materials, although other materials may be used in ways that are compatible with these more traditional materials. The Broadway Market is an example of a development that blends well with its surroundings and includes a mixture of materials, including masonry.

**DC4-II Exterior Finish Materials**

**DC4-II-i. Building exteriors:** Should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

1. Use wood shingles or board and batten siding on residential structures.
2. Avoid wood or metal siding materials on commercial structures.
3. Provide operable windows, especially on storefronts.
4. Use materials that are consistent with the existing or intended neighborhood character, including brick, cast stone, architectural stone, terracotta details, and concrete that incorporates texture and color.

5. Consider each building as a high-quality, long-term addition to the neighborhood; exterior design and materials should exhibit permanence and quality appropriate to the Capitol Hill neighborhood.
6. The use of applied foam ornamentation and EIFS (Exterior Insulation & Finish System) is discouraged, especially on ground level locations.

**DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

At the time of the Recommendation Meeting, one departure was requested.

1. **Building Width (SMC 23.45.527).** The Code requires a maximum combined length of facades within 15 feet of a lot line to not exceed 65% of the length of that lot lone. The lot line is 122.49 feet long; 65% of this dimension is 79.6 feet.

   The proposed design requested to increase the structure length to 90 feet, 7.5 inches (74%).

   The Board recommended unanimously in favor of the departure request as the development of the design included a courtyard with comfortably proportioned dimensions, which was preferred by the Board at the EDG meeting. Furthermore, the building footprint was shifted to maintain distance from the existing Exceptional street trees on Howell Street for their protection (DC3-I-V) and provide wider setbacks from the neighbors to the north (CS2-D-5).

**BOARD DIRECTION**

At the conclusion of the Final Recommendation meeting, the Board recommended approval of the project with conditions.

The recommendation summarized above was based on the design review packet dated Wednesday, January 28, 2015, and the materials shown and verbally described by the applicant at the Wednesday, January 28, 2015 Design Recommendation meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and reviewing the materials, the four Design Review Board members recommended APPROVAL of the subject design and departures with the following conditions:

1. On the north elevation, the light color shown as Heron Plume be replaced with the darker tone shown as Urban Bronze.
2. On the south elevation, the light color, shown as Heron Plume, be adjusted to a warmer, more muted tone of grey.

3. Explore with the Planner both brick palettes (monochromatic versus variegate) to avoid an institutional appearance, while recognizing the contemporary design within the more traditional neighborhood context.
4. The exterior light fixtures should be a dark bronze color, rather than the silver color (shown on page 28) to match the windows, bollards and other lighting fixtures.
5. The vents shown on all elevations should be colored to match the building field color in which they are located.